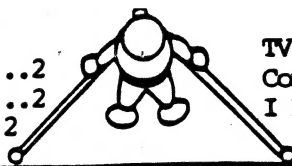


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MATWATCH

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Steve's Sidelights By Steve Beverly

SOUTHERN: A REAL-LIFE SOAP

This past week, my barber mistook me for an ROTC cadet, Abby left KNOTS LANDING, Sue Ellen left DALLAS, DYNASTY was canceled and the best cliffhanger of all was in Griffin, Ga.

Southern Championship Wrestling, the one-time address of Austin Idol, Paul E. Dangerously, Dick Slater, Bruiser Brody, Manny Fernandez, Chris Adams, Michael Hayes, the Rock & Roll Express and Abdullah the Butcher, enough talent to warm up a boring evening, died and was reborn last week in a matter of 24 hours--well, maybe given a desperation attempt at CPR.

MATWATCH has learned the story from a variety of sources close to the promotion. The situation involves the alleged apathy on the part of SCW majority owner Jerry Blackwell, an attempted unfriendly takeover of SCW and--as is often the case in most dying independents, money and television.

Blackwell, as MATWATCH has been told by several sources who have asked to remain unnamed, has not taken an active part in the daily operations of SCW in months, often showing up only minutes before TV tapings and revamping the program his bookers worked weeks to plan. We were unable to reach Blackwell for comment but part of his distractions came during the illness and subsequent death of his son in the winter.

The SCW TV show, which one year ago was considered one of the hotter indie programs with extensive use of Brody, a featured role in the Atlanta MATL WRESTLETHON and the late September sellout of Cobb County Civic Center for a Jerry Lawler-Tommy Rich AWA title match, has reverted in recent months to a young Atlanta-area talent-based show, along with veterans such as Mr. Wrestling II, the now departed Ron Starr and a well-below-peak Rich. Still, Blackwell has continued to distribute the show to markets outside the Georgia-Chattanooga area, where the promotion is based.

Sources say Blackwell fell in arrears to TV producer-director Larry Oldag for production and tape costs. Plus, Blackwell failed to arrange a tape site for the show to air last Saturday in most markets. Blackwell told Oldag to edit together a retrospective show. When Oldag reminded Blackwell SCW aired a recap show only two weeks earlier, Blackwell seemed unconcerned.

Frustrated, in the process, at the promotion's alleged disorganization, Ted Allen and Jimmy Powell, the Georgia Power tag team handling much of SCW's

recent bookings, joined with Oldag and Gordon Clements to tentatively form GEORGIA ALL-STAR WRESTLING. The plan had the new group taking in the SCW roster excepting Rich and replacing the SCW show in all markets which would agree, effective the weekend of May 27.

At noon last Wednesday, Blackwell was told and MATWATCH was told he pleaded

hurt and confusion at the planned takeover. In one source's words: "Jerry almost started crying. Nobody dislikes Jerry personally. They're just fed up with him sleeping 'til 4 in the afternoon every day and never being available."

The key to the TV slot was Atlanta's WVEU, where SCW has been part of the SUPERSTARS block since its inception and is the key to its survival. Boni Blackstone, SUPERSTARS host, would not comment publicly but a source close to the situation says Blackstone was "in an impossible situation. Boni wants one local show on Channel 69 and if Jerry wasn't going to produce, she had no choice but to go with Ted and Jimmy's show."

By Wednesday night, Blackwell had phoned both Blackstone and Oldag and some of his key wrestlers to plead for more time. Reportedly, his plans were to bring in Jerry Oates as booker and Blackwell further announced a sharing agreement with Nelson Royal's ATLANTIC COAST promotion, whereby both Royal and Blackwell would work to get their respective shows aired in the other's territory.

A summit was called Thursday, in which Blackwell, Oldag, Rich--who reportedly had been promised the Southern belt by Blackwell, Allen and Powell, all met. Oldag, head of production for Griffin, Ga. independent WCOM-TV, agreed to Blackwell's plea for a 30-day grace period, during which he pledged to settle his bills and take a more direct interest in the company. In return, Blackwell will reportedly stop sending tapes outside his territory (except for ACW cities), such as to Paducah KY, where SCW airs in a six-hour Saturday night block. Paducah TV 54 host Tony Richards told MATWATCH he did not receive a tape for airing Saturday.

SCW hastily patched a recap show last weekend and taped a new episode for air this week. But we've learned Powell and some partners are scouting for a TV producer and may be planning their own opposition despite all.

After listening to these stories in the last week, maybe J.R. Ewing ought to chunk the oil business next year and be a wrestling promoter. The stories could be equally as juicy.

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THIS WEEK'S HEADLINES

CLEVELAND CLASH, TWO WWF SHOWS
AMONG TOP 50 IN CABLE 1ST QUARTER

NEW YORK - Three wrestling shows placed in the top 50 single telecasts for basic cable during the first quarter.

CLASH OF THE CHAMPIONS V from Cleveland, with a 4.6 rating, finished 15th. The WWF PRIME TIME WRESTLEMANIA preview show on USA finished 34th with a 3.8. Number 44 was the PRIME TIME show featuring the Brooklyn Brawler's attack on Terry Taylor.

The NFL PRO BOWL on ESPN and the college GATOR BOWL and HOLIDAY BOWL topped the list.

APRIL CABLE NIELSENS PLACE

4 WRESTLING SHOWS IN TOP 10

NEW YORK - RAGIN' CAJUN CLASH, the live TBS special from New Orleans, was the top-ranked single program on basic cable television in April.

The 4.3/10 share for CLASH placed it a half-point above the April 3 edition of PRIME TIME WRESTLING on USA. The entire April top ten:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-----|
| 1. CLASH VI (TBS) | 4.3 |
| 2. PRIME TIME WRESTLING (USA) | 3.8 |
| BRADY BUNCH (TBS) | 3.8 |
| 4. MOVIE: "The Gambler" (TBS) | 3.6 |
| 5. VALLEYDALE 500 (ESPN) | 3.5 |
| MOVIE: "Support Loc Gunf" (TBS) | 3.5 |
| LOONEY TUNES (Nickelodeon) | 3.5 |
| 8. TRANSOUTH 500 (ESPN) | 3.4 |
| MOVIE: "Cheyenne Autumn" (TBS) | 3.4 |
| PRIME TIME WRESTLING (USA 4/10) | 3.4 |
| MOVIE: "Kung Fu" (TBS) | 3.4 |
| ALL-AM. WRESTLING (USA 4/9) | 3.4 |

CORNETTE, MIDNIGHTS TO SIGN

NEW NWA CONTRACTS TUESDAY

ATLANTA - Jim Cornette and the Midnight Express were scheduled to sign new one-year NWA contracts here Tuesday, only seven weeks after leaving the promotion over a dispute with former booker George Scott.

Terms of the deal were not disclosed but Cornette and the Midnight Express, who will maintain babyface personas for the present, were to appear at the TBS CENTER STAGE tapings Wednesday night.

In addition, Cornette is expected to be named host of the NWA WRESTLING POWER HOUR, which premieres June 23 at 10:30 p.m. on the SuperStation.

PINFALL PROFILE

THE SCREENING ROOM: THE GOLDEN AGE OF WRESTLING
(FNN/SCORE, May 14, 11 p.m.)

An adult wrestling fan's adolescent delight symbolized the first half-hour of THE GOLDEN AGE OF WRESTLING, FNN/SCORE's nostalgic visit to the Cauliflower Alley Club, an unofficial wrestling hall of fame.

Taped at the club's induction banquet in March, the program featured interviews and speeches by ex-wrestlers Johnny Valentine, Killer Kowalski, June Byers, Danny McShain, Pepper Gomez and the Fabulous Moolah and manager Dr. Lee Grable. The second half-hour, in the SCORE studio, saw former star Red Bastien and SCORE's Broadway Danny Wolf handling live call-in questions.

The Alley Club segments were smoothly handled, except for the stage speeches by McShain and Grable. The audio of each was taken from the house sound system and was difficult to hear.

Wolf asked the key questions most discerning fans would. Kowalski offered the most pointed responses, when he said many of today's wrestlers "go in the ring and in about 5 or 6 minutes, their tongue is hanging out--they can't breathe any more. They know nothing about wrestling. They memorize a few moves. They do not know when to use them. They jump around like idiots."

Kowalski further predicted that the excessive hype of today's wrestling would probably "cycle away in four or five years and the guys that can only do the hype, they'll have to get a job."

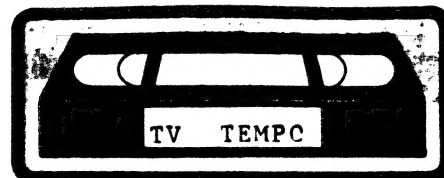
Former West Coast star Chris Tolos offered the most colorful comments, reminiscing about his classic grudge battles with Freddie Blassie. He ended with his trademark signoff: "The only way to spell wrestling: T-O-L-O-S!"

Where the show dragged, in portions, is during the call-in segment---not because of the callers but because Bastien tap-danced around even some of the elementary questions. He only claimed to have "heard" that Randy Savage and Liz Poffo were married and Wolf had to save that moment, along with acknowledging that Angelo Poffo was Randy's father. When MATWATCHer Jim Dough asked a good analytical question about who Bastien would rate the best technical tag team today, he could not come up with a specific answer.

One upbeat moment was when Bastien was surprised with a call from former foe Kurt Von Hess, whom he had not seen in 20 years.

If I would have made one key alteration in this show, I would have made Wolf the host, instead of the "resident expert." Hugh Malay added nothing as emcee, other than to name callers and it was obvious he knew little about wrestling. Wolf is quite capable of taking a lead role and could have probed Bastien more succinctly on his generic answers, had he been in the host's role.

Still, this was an entertaining program and I hope FNN/SCORE tries more specials of this ilk. Rating: POWERSLAM.



SCALE: PINFALL! - Must See PILEDRIVER - Excellent
POWERSLAM - Good DRAW - Average RESTHOLD - Fair BOMB
- Poor PLUS - Midscale rating.

(PMW) - FLA. IAG TITLE: Mike Graham & Dustin Rhodes d. Southern Force for belts but Tony Anthony jumps Dustin after; Tyree Pride d. El Cid; Jomo Kenya d. Brady Higgins; Steelman d. Cliff Sheets, who stretchers when Oliver Humperdink hits him with cage door; Larry Zbyszko d. Ric Diamond. RESTHOLD-PLUS.

(CWA) - Billy Travis/Jeff Jarrett d. Keith Eric/Red Devil; Mark Starr/Chris Champion (heels) d. Freezer Thompson & Rusty Brooks; Action Jackson d. The Grappler; Robert Fuller/Brian Lee d. Alan Reynolds/D.D. Araya. VIDEOS: Travis/Jarrett, Humongous, Mason-Dixon. ANGLES: Sylvia slaps Jackson but Action's sister runs out of crowd and beats the tar out of Sylvia; Jerry Lawler, in taped interview, says he's still unable to return. Ronald V. Gossett IV comes out with Tojo Yamamoto. As interview goes on, Lawler (in a Freddy Krueger outfit) appears and throws fire in face of Tojo, who stretchers. DRAW.

(PORTLAND/2 Wks. Ago) - Beetlejuice wins DQ over Buddy Rose; Top Gun wins DQ when thrown over top by Jonathan Boyd; Southern Rockers d. Al Madril & C.W. Bergstrom; Scotty the Body d. Rex King by countout; Grappler d. Carl Stiles in hair vs. mask match where during ref bump, Grappler (Len Denton) is unmasked and Stiles snaps his pic. But Nord the Barbarian clotheslines Stiles to give Grappler pin. Faces save Stiles from haircut and Don Owen orders cage rematch. ANGLES...ROSE GARDEN: Buddy Rose sees Steve Doll kissing his valet, so Scotty throws hot coffee in Doll's face; Scotty claims to have had no sleep all week, worrying about Rockers' reunion. Camera catches him picking his nose. POWERSLAM.

(PORTLAND/Last Week) - Top Gun vs. Madril double countout; Beetlejuice d. Bergstrom; Doll d. Scotty in I QUIT match; Boyd d. King; Rose wins DQ over Peterson for over-top; Grappler vs. Stiles cage match in progress as show ends. Nord appears in security outfit but is stopped from climbing cage by Brian Adams, who brawls all over building with Nord. ANGLES: Grappler places \$1,000 bounty on mask of Midnight Soldier; Top Gun burns Al Madril after Al pulls lighter on Gun; Scotty, Rose and Boyd attack Rockers and Boyd hits Doll with loaded glove before putting lipstick, powder and a dress on Doll. POWERSLAM-PLUS.

(ACW) - Tommy Angel double DQ w. Tai when Saoni & Ricky Nelson run in; Larry Stephens d. David Isley; M.O.D. Squad d. Gene Ligon/Jack Jackson; Rusty Riddle d. Brian Johnson; Colt Steel d. Nelson; Sam Houston d. Ring Lord Speedy Gonzales. RESTHOLD-PLUS.

(NCCW) - Steve Simpson d. Botswana Beast; Shaun Simpson d. Beauty; Cactus Jack Manson d. Dick Whitford; Eric Embry/Mil Mascaras d. Buddy Roberts & Super Zodiac. ANGLE: NCCW syndicator Max Andrews named temporary matchmaker. RESTHOLD-PLUS.

(PMTW) - WEF, DiBiase-Roberts angle; ACW, Bobby Fulton arrives; CWA, Mason-Dixon Connection win squash; NWA, highlights of WRESTLE WAR '89; CMF, Kevin Dillinger d. Scott Elder; Wendell Cooley d. Lou Fabiano but Jap Conn/Dillinger run in and spray Cooley's hair white. MARS WRESTLER OF WEEK - Ric Flair. DRAW.

(WEF/USA) - [PRIME TIME]: Key match, Jim Duggan d. Haku for crown. RESTHOLD.

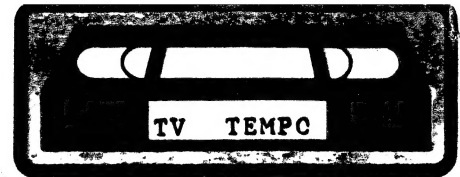
(WEF/SYND.) - [CHALLENGE]: Rockers vs. Rougeaus never starts. Jimmy Hart angered at Rockers entering ring to Rougeaus' music. Jacques & Raymond doubleteam Sean Michaels and injure him with the megaphone; Brutus Beefcake d. J.T. Thomas; Dino Bravo d. Scott Coulton; Tito Santana d. Tom Stone; Ted DiBiase d. Jim Powers; Anabolic Warrior d. Barry Horowitz. DRAW.

[SUPERSTARS]: Rick Rude d. Jim Evans; Sheepwackers d. Horowitz/Chris Curtis; Martel d. Thomas; Foghorn Leghorn d. Brooklyn Brawler; Curt Hennig d. Red Tyler; ANGLES: Bro. Love w. Jake Roberts, who brings out second snake; Coronation of King Duggan while Heenan, Haku, Andre plot revenge. RESTHOLD-PLUS.

(NWA/SYND.) - [NWA PRO]: Great Muta d. Tom Branch; Ron Simmons d. Randy Rose when Tommy Young is distracted by Teddy Long; Freebirds d. Trent Knight/George South; Dick Murdoch d. The Raider; Eddie Gilbert wins DQ over Kevin Sullivan when SST/Paul E. run in; VIDEOS: (both shows) Dynamic Dudes, Brian Pillman, Norman; ANGLES: Muta, Sting standoff over Dragonshy Match; Lee Scott is about to go against Dwayne Bruce in rookie match when Terry Funk attacks and destroys both; PEDICINO'S NOSE: (both) Road Warriors, Flair-Funk recaps. DRAW-PLUS. [WORLD WIDE]: NWA TV TITLE, Sting d. Simmons; Gilbert/Scott Steiner d. Jack Victory/The Enforcer; Freebirds d. Greg Evans/Bucky Seigler; Dynamic Dudes d. Lee Scott/Raider; Butch Reed d. Cougar Jay; Road Warriors double DQ vs. SST when each team throws out a ref and a wild brawl ensues. POWERSLAM.

(NWA/TBS) - [WCW]: NWA TV TITLE, Sting d. Victory; Steiner d. Tom Branch and as Sullivan tries to run in, Gilbert shows with a chair; Funk d. Eddie Guerro despite tossing him over top; Simmons/Ranger Ross d. Enforcer/Scott; Reed d. Cougar Jay; WORLD TAG TOURNEY: Freebirds win countout over Road Warriors when SST ambush and lure Warriors into brawl. VIDEOS: Dudes ("Don't Worry...Be Happy"), Pillman II. ANGLE: Funk gets on knees and begs Jim Ross to be put into NWA top 10. POWERSLAM-PLUS.

(CMF) - Danny Davis d. Don Sanders; Stomper Harris d. Mike Anthony; Bill Dundee/Adrian Street DQ over Jap Conn when Kevin Dillinger uses bullrope on Street. Dundee retrieves two 1x6s from dressing room and bashes all 3 heels into juice jobs; Botswana Beast d. Matthew Burns; Wendell Cooley d. Russian Destroyer; Ricky & Todd Morton d. Dillinger/Lou Fabiano. VIDEOS: Street/Dundee, Fantastics. RESTHOLD-PLUS.



(AWA) - Akio Sato d. Jim Evans; Karate Kid d. Cowboy Contrell; CLASSIC: Chris Taylor d. Jimmy Valiant/Buddy Rose; Mark Nulty intros Joe Blanchard as new AWA prez; ANGLE: As Ken Patera is about to win carlift contest with Wayne Bloom, Johnny Valiant & Destruction Crew ambush, "separate" Brad Rheingans' shoulder and bust open Ken Patera. RESTHOLD.

LINES OF THE WEEK - 1. Terry Funk, PWF: "Why does Dusty Rhodes look like an inflated marshmallow in a microwave with a deflated ego? Because I stomped him down." 2. Funk, WWF: "Rick Steiner is living proof that if they change Roe vs. Wade, they'd be making a big mistake." 3. Lance Russell, NWA: "He (Funk) doesn't have a screw loose, he has a whole headful missing." 4. Paul Ellering, NWA: "Paul E., you're letting your mouth write checks your body can't cash." 5. Don Coss, Portland, on Scotty's nosepick: "You give the words pickin' and grinnin' new meaning." 6. Scotty the Body, Portland: "I didn't quit. I said, 'Yes, I don't give up!'" 7. Moolah, FNN, on GLOW: "As far as I'm concerned, they do a good job as strippers, but they're not wrestlers." 8. Funk, NWA: "I'm just like Nolan Ryan: 42 and trying to teach you what a hero is." 9. Jesse Ventura, WEF: "McMahon, who do they (Demolition) think they are, the WWF's version of Siskel & Ebert?" 10. Ventura, WEF, on King Duggan: "This just reaffirms why we needed freedom from the British."

11. Gary Hart, NWA, to Sting: "There ain't enough time in your life to learn nuttin' about nuttin'." 12. Dr. Patrick Harvey, WCW, on Steiner's bicep: "It's sorta like taking a chicken bone and splitting it open." 13. Killer Kowalski, FNN: "The people of today don't want to see much wrestling. They want to see the hype." 14. Ellering, NWA: "Your men (SST) are like dogs barking at cars. What are they gonna do when they get to the car (Road Warriors)?" 15. Ronald Gossett, CWA: "The last time I saw Jerry Lawler, my blood pressure went 280 over 160." 16. Rhodes, PWF: "All you kids know Terry Funk didn't turn into a monster. That's just tele-bision." 17. Ventura, WEF, on Sheepwalkers: "There's only one team that smells like 'em." 18. Bobby Heenan, WEF: "There are a million fools in the world. You're probably one of them." 19. Heenan, WEF: "That was Koko? I thought it was someone who made bail for James Brown." 20. Randy Hales, CWF: "Here's a dime, Charlie Platt. Go call someone who really cares."

21. Teddy Long, WCW: "Don King might be working for me." 22. Paul E. Dangerously, NME: "The Sheik had the Iranian flu. He was back in Teheran, met up with his ex-wife... it was a messy divorce." 23. Michael Hayes, WWF, to Ross: "Your woman, if you had one, would leave you every time for a man like me."

STRONGEST COMMENTS - 1. Killer Kowalski, FNN: "These steroid freaks go in the ring and in about five or six minutes, their tongue is hanging out. They know nothing about wrestling." 2. Pedicino, NWA: "Jim Herd, why did the NWA give Terry Funk a permit to

wrestle only 24 hours after his attack on Ric Flair?" 3. Sullivan, WWF: "In the Big 8, they don't put out any brain surgeons."

ENGLISH LESSON - Greg Valentine, WEF: "My manager & I have WENT all the way to the top of the WWF."

BEST PICTURES - 1. TBS, aerials of Sting and Eddie Guerrero. 2. AWA, Olympians-Destruction Crew brawl. 3. TBS, Funk begging Ross. 4. WEF, Rougeaus-Rockers.

BEST PRODUCTION - 1. TBS, Dynamic Dudes "Don't Worry" video. 2. FNN, Cauliflower Alley "Then & Now" seg.

NICKNAMES OF THE WEEK - 1. "The Audie Murphy of the wrestling ring," to Sting on TBS WW'89 ad. 2. "The Round Mound of Sound," given to Pedicino by Jim Ross.

DREADED GLITCH AWARD - 1. WXTX, Columbus GA, for dumping MCCW after 5 minutes for tape problems and subbing a pre-Thanksgiving WEF SPOTLIGHT. 2. FNN, unreadable super on Dr. Lee Grable.

MISSED SHOT AWARD - Tommy Edwards, TBS, for missing Paul E. ambushing Paul Ellering in Warriors-Freebirds match.

DAVID CROCKETT AWARD - Larry Nelson, AWA, for jumping up and down like a kid in Wayne Bloom's face.

BLOOPER AWARDS - 1. NWA, for graphic during PEDICINO'S NOSE seg in Raleigh plugging June 26 card which gave away finish of world tag tourney before it ever starts (I won't name the team). Why does that happen? 2. TBS, Lex Luger still billed as U.S. champion in BEST OF STARRCADE video spot.

BOO AWARDS - 1. SCW, for second recap show in 3 weeks and a lousy one, at that. 2. NWA, for not DQing Funk when he threw Guerrero over top and not pursuing it. 3. Liz Poffo, for totally unconvincing interview w. Gene Okerlund.

TUBE TALK

Joe's getting much more opinionated on PEDICINO'S NOSE, a good move---but the post-production people really screwed up the Raleigh plug... WCW was a tremendous show but I'm not seeing enough closeups and why do we miss shots like Paul E.'s distraction?... I thought Rougeaus-Rockers was one of the better things Jimmy Hart's been involved in lately... CWF brawl between Dundee/Street & Jap Conn was excellent but rest of show below par.

Outside of that carlift angle, which was the best (and only) angle AWA has done in ages, the ESPN show was horrible... I hope Liz Poffo does better pushing her perfume than she does in interviews.... Theodore R. Long continues to impress.

COMINGS & GOINGS

THE BIG ANNOUNCEMENT: Whatever statement Ted Turner was to make concerning wrestling came after our deadline, if it was made at all. We hope to have more next week but we were told it is no major talent raid from the WEF. It may concern an upcoming NWA event but a trusted source says, "I don't believe it's anything hardcore fans will run around the block over."

CORNY'S POWER HOUR: Nothing official at all but expect Bob Caudle to get strong consideration as Jim Cornette's co-host on TBS' POWER HOUR. One comment: the NWA blew the suspense of the Midnight's return by posting their pairings in the world tag tournament on the May 13 show. Their comeback should have had a major element of surprise.

HULK'S REVIEWS: Not good. Are you surprised? VARIETY, which reviewed NO HOLDS BARRED at the Cannes Film Festival, called it "a disappointing big screen vehicle which has no legs." HOLDS was said to have "an extremely lame plotline and uninteresting wrestling action, poorly photographed."

As for Hogan, VARIETY calls his acting "poor...his line-reading lacks any conviction." Tiny Lister, as Zeus, is called "physically right but stuck with unfortunate stereotyping." Best marks go to Stan Hansen, who was called "engaging and funny," and Joan Severance, said to "carry Hogan" in the review.

ALL RINGS BARRED?: Speaking of rings, NATPE, the U.S. TV programmers' organization, will vote soon on a new measure which would ban the WEF from bringing a ring and holding live matches on the floor at its next convention. Executives say too much entertainment and too little business is happening.

TBS SYNDIES: No real movement on improving the TBS syndication lineup. The Turner syndie department is pushing a new game show, THE LAST WORD; a strange-story type show, THE SECRET WORLD; and a BEACH BOYS special--all of which are taking priority over wrestling.

NO BASH WEST: With weak syndie outlets on the West Coast, our info on the Bash going to L.A. is out the door. No major West Coast Bashes because of mostly weak stations to plug them.

CLASH UPDATE: On the CLASH VII special June 14, Flair-Funk is out (Ric won't wrestle again until the 23rd of July and the storyline will have him considering retirement from the "neck injury") but Steamboat-Funk may be in. Sting-Muta also won't be on until the PPV. But expect lots of angles and new talent intros on the 14th.

BASH UPDATE: One Bash will be in Providence at Brown University and another at Rupp Arena in Lexington. Expect most of Funk's pre-PPV Bashes to be against Sting or Eddie Gilbert. Also, expect some 6-mans with the Freebirds (including Jimmy Garvin), Warriors-SST and possibly Norman vs. Scott Hall.

Another element in the pre-PPV Bashes will be a 2-ring, triple chance battle royal where a fan in each town can win a trip to the PPV by picking the winner. And post-PPV, look for at least one WAR GAMES event...but no TRIPLE TOWER OF DOOM, thankfully!

THEY'RE THINKING: I've been told Jack Petrik, NCM prez, was one of the catalysts behind keeping Flair out until the July PPV to build suspense. It's a gamble but it may well pay off at cable offices.

STEINER UPDATE: The latest on Rick Steiner is probably a 6-week recupe period. His brother, Scott, will team with Gilbert to defend the U.S. tag belts during Rick's absence.

SUPER LOU: Capt. Lou Albano shaved his facial hair on REGIS & KATHIE LEE last week in preparation for his starring role in the new live-action series SUPER MARIO BROTHERS HOUR this fall. I can't think of a more appropo part.

AND THEY WANT PAYRAISES?: Rep. Mervyn Dymally (D-Cal.) recently read into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD his love for the ring and Hulk Hogan ("I cherish those moments spent watching Hulk in action.") Considering some of the crap which is read into the RECORD, this isn't so bad but remember how your tax time is spent next time these guys want a payraise.

BLOODY PROBE: The transmitter of WVEU in Atlanta took a lightning hit during SCW May 13 so Boni Blackstone reran the show Saturday, minus the Tommy Rich juicing on the Ford Probe. Believe me, it was as gross or worse than Percy Pringle's recent WCCW blading. What bothered me about that show is it became a virtual program-length commercial for the car dealership.

WHO'S WORKING HERE?: Samuel Kent, SCW manager, was doing a commercial with Bill Walker, the Griffin car dealer, when---to Kent's surprise, Walker became enraged and began to go after Kent. Rich, watching from the control room, came out and pounded Walker from behind and left him laying. The guys swear this was a shoot and Kent was so frightened at Walker's antics, he spent 15 minutes in his car with the door locked.

CWA/PWF CHANGES: With Tony Anthony in Florida now, Action Jackson goes face. Mike Graham & Dustin Rhodes now have the Florida tag belts.

FINALLY, ON DUSTY: I have had at least 4 unconfirmed reports that Dusty has reached agreement to join the WEF this summer. I'm close to believing it now but no word, if he goes, on whether PWF shuts down, which I would predict.

TUBE TALK

(Continued from Page 4)

One reason the SCW announcers have been so dreadful: Blackwell hasn't been paying them a red cent.... Paul Ellering did the best interview he has in four years on NWA PRO.... At least the WEF coronation of Duggan was only half as long as that killer for Haku last year.... Sources outside the NWA say Sid Eudy (Humongous) will get a dark match tryout either this week or next.... WCW is back at a 7:05 ET time this weekend (but only one hour).

Expect almost half of next weekend's WEF shows to be clips of NO HOLDS.... New lineup for June 5 TV taping in Columbus GA (dark matches): Luger vs. Hayes (Badstreet match), Gilbert vs. Funk (Bounty match), Orton vs. Murdoch (Bullrope match).

I REMEMBER: The Night Butcher Vachon Had a Heart

In his prime, Paul Vachon had that Great Malenko-Ole Anderson-Bulldog Brower type persona. You hated him simply because he was worth hating. Quite a cry from the softie who sang "Because" and was later body-slammed by David Shultz during his TNT "wedding" in 1984.

His initial Georgia feud with Mario Galento heated every house in the state in their battles of the hangman holds. Mario would usually get the victory but Vachon would get his heat back with a dastardly attack after the match.

His battles with Alberto Torres are still discussed by veteran fans today, highlighted by the Atlanta classic in which the Butcher used a chair on Torres to win a loser-leave-Georgia match, an event altered eight months later when Alberto returned as The Avenger to whip Vachon in every Georgia arena.

One of those Torres-Vachon confrontations was to take place on a warm July evening in Brunswick, Ga., just off the Atlantic coast. Alberto would take two out of three falls from the Butcher to send the 800 or so at the National Guard Armory home happy.

But earlier in the evening, Vachon sat patiently in a wooden frame chair by his dressing room, watching the preliminaries. The Butcher seemed grumpier than usual, probably because he was missing a larger pay night in Augusta's Bell Auditorium.

Just after the first match, we spotted from Waycross a couple of friends, who had brought their infant son with them to the card (a healthy indoctrination to life, to be sure). They stopped to arrange their concessions and we rushed over to say hello. Shortly after the conversation began, the child broke out in an uncontrollable squall, just as Vachon rose from his chair. I probably would have screamed, too, if that had been my first exposure to the distinctive Vachon countenance.

Nothing the mother could do would quiet the child, when, suddenly, Vachon came our way (and at the age of 13, I had no idea what he was going to do) and said in an uncharacteristic voice, "It's okay.... it's not

so bad.... nobody's going to bother you." The Butcher asked if he could hold the baby. The parents said yes, and in a period of three to four minutes, Vachon sat down and calmly rocked the infant to sleep. Could you picture that in public from Ted DiBiase?

We still pulled for Torres to do a number on Vachon that night---but not quite as intensely as before seeing that picture of a killer melting in the presence of a baby. Somehow, the blade of The Butcher just didn't cut quite so hard any more.

RATINGS RAP: SYNDICATION

(Week Ending April 30)	Rating	Stations	Pct. U.S.
WWF	9.5	257	97%
NWA	5.2	144	90%

(ANALYSIS: This was basically an all-squash week on the WEF, so no logical explanation for its half-point gain. This was the week some of those hot NWA matches from Chicago aired and the ratings dropped another 0.2. Perhaps Harry White had the best explanation when he said: "We know they're getting better, but do THEY (the casual fans) know it?")

RATINGS RAP: CABLE

(Week Ending May 15)	Rating	Share	Total Homes
WWF PRIME TIME (USA 5/15)	3.2	4.9	1.5 mil.
WWF ALL-AMERICAN (USA 5/14)	2.8	9.2	1.32 mil.
NWA WORLD CHAMP. (TBS 5/13)	1.8	3.5	875,000
NWA MAIN EVENT (TBS 5/14)	1.8	4.3	872,000
NWA MAIN EVENT AM (TBS 5/13)	0.6	4.9	291,000

(ANALYSIS: PRIME TIME is back up, even with only Duggan-Haku its primary match, thanks to a weaker network night. The 9-plus share on ALL-AM is phenomenal for a show mostly compiled of past syndicated matches. WCW actually did better with a 10:30 start than it did two weeks ago with a 10:20 start but the move to 6:05 will probably stabilize those numbers. MAIN EVENT did its all-time low with a 1.8 but TBS' Jeff Carr says all day Sunday on TBS was unusually low.)

MATWATCH SUBSCRIPTIONS

Our campaign to reach 500 subscribers stood at 480 as of the middle of last week. The 500th subscriber will receive a free 8-issue set (or in the case of a gift, the giver gets the free set).

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